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LESSONS LEARNED
FROM
REVIEW OF AFRICA BUREAU
EVALUATIONS 1987-1989

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

AFR/DP/PPE requested Solloway & Associates, Inc. (represented by Richard Solloway and Henry Johnson) to carry out a comparative review of evaluations submitted by Africa Bureau missions from 1987-1989 and synthesize the key lessons learned. We were asked (1) to assess progress, identify issues, and look for successes, and (2) to prepare a report on lessons learned that would be useful in future planning to Bureau senior managers and to project-level personnel. Our review led to the conclusions and recommendations which follow.

PROGRESS

Progress was mixed. Projects in agriculture, education, family planning, transportation, and small enterprise development were generally doing well. However, having more difficulty were CCCD and natural resources projects. The Bureau should consider measures to strengthen performance in these areas especially.

SUCCESES

A number of innovative approaches and successes in implementation are noted sector by sector in Section IV. Particularly worthy of attention are successes in agriculture, job-related skills, natural resources, and small enterprise development where efforts were made to work directly with, understand and involve people at the grass-roots levels. An implementation success, potentially helpful in future Commodity Import Programs (CIPs), is the computerized tracking and monitoring system utilized in the Kenya CIP.

ISSUES

We identified the most important issues to be:

- Project complexity was a root cause of many implementation problems. The Bureau should seek to simplify project design and implementation to the maximum extent possible.
- Faulty project design assumptions contributed to a number of breakdowns during implementation. More attention should be paid to the accuracy of assumptions made during project design.

- Institutional development should be given higher priority in project design, implementation, and management. As a minimum, the Bureau should insist that all foreign advisors have counterparts and responsibility for developing them.
- A stronger focus on sustainability factors is needed both at the outset of project planning and during implementation.
- A more systematic effort to gather impact data is needed.
- There is a need to pay more attention to assessing gender role implications and impact on women during project design, implementation and evaluations.
- Mission management needs to examine more carefully the staffing implications and requirements of its projects. USAID management implications and staff demands were frequently underestimated. With reduced direct-hire field staff, the Bureau has to weigh more carefully the complexity of projects and their management needs against the limited management resources available to manage them.
- Evaluations appeared to be effective in surfacing issues and signaling the need for mid-course corrections. But many projects did not appear to have their first external evaluation until the third or even fourth year of implementation. The Bureau should continue to emphasize external evaluations, but should also press for more systematic in-house monitoring and evaluation efforts during earlier stages of project implementation.

II. INTRODUCTION

The Africa Bureau requested a comparative review of evaluations submitted from Africa missions during 1987-1989 and preparation of a synthesis of key lessons learned. The synthesis was to be targeted for two audiences: senior decision makers on the one hand and project managers, designers and technical staff on the other.

Solloway & Associates formed a team of Richard Solloway, company president and a retired A.I.D. Controller, and Henry Johnson, a retired A.I.D. Senior Foreign Service Officer, to carry out the review. Based on the team's conclusions, Mr. Johnson took the lead in preparing this report.

The review covered some 65 evaluations together with an excellent summary of the evaluations prepared under a separate contract by Maureen Norton. Our efforts were facilitated by Cynthia Clapp-Wincek of AFR/DP/PPE who briefed us at the outset and guided us during the review.

Other than the Africa Bureau Congressional Presentation and the Development Fund for Africa Action Plan, which we consulted for general background, we confined our review to the evaluations themselves. Our scope of work did not include any additional research to verify the evaluations or to put them into the context of broader Africa Bureau policies, practices, and operations.

In reaching our conclusions, therefore, we took the evaluations at face value. We made no allowances for variations in quality or for the tendency of some to be more critical than others. We also had to accept lack of comparability in that the evaluations did not consistently address the same set of questions. Furthermore, 44 of the evaluations reviewed were interim and only 21 were final. In almost all of the evaluations, not enough time had passed for project impact to be assessed.

Despite these limitations, we believe there are lessons suggested by the evaluations that deserve attention and can be helpful to both senior managers and project level personnel in future project design and implementation.

Section III attempts to summarize key issues emerging from the entire review that merit attention from top management in the Bureau. Section IV groups the evaluations into several sectors and summarizes progress, issues, and successes characteristic to the sector for project level personnel and technical staff. Section V suggests recommendations for improving future evaluations.

III. SUMMARY FOR SENIOR MANAGERS

A. PROGRESS

Progress in the portfolio of projects reviewed was, as would be expected, better in some areas than others. Projects in A.I.D.'s more traditional areas of agriculture, education, family planning, and in transportation were generally doing well. Also, the small enterprise development activities were showing good promise. Progress was less positive in the newer initiative areas - Combatting Childhood Communicable Diseases (CCCD) and natural resources. In these newer areas, progress was limited to achieving outputs. Evidence of impact was, for the most part, partial and preliminary because most of the evaluations were interim.

While each project had its own reasons for greater or lesser progress, certain factors stand out within the sectors as well as throughout the portfolio. Section IV examines these factors sector by sector.

In this section, we attempt to highlight those factors which emerge as key issues across the portfolio as a whole. While neither new nor surprising, they are factors of traditional A.I.D. concern and focus. We believe, however, they deserve special attention from Bureau senior managers because of their significant impact on the success of the projects.

B. PROJECT COMPLEXITY

While specifically identified as an issue in only a few of the evaluations, a root cause of most implementation difficulties throughout the portfolio was the sheer complexity of the projects. In reviewing the evaluations, one could not help but be struck by the number of components, institutions, and players involved in project after project. Virtually all the issues discussed below stem in greater or lesser degree from this issue of complexity.

We recognize the challenge the Africa Bureau faces with needs being great everywhere and reduced direct-hire staff for hands-on management. But the basic need to simplify project design and implementation, whenever and however possible, is of paramount importance.

C. PROJECT DESIGN

A number of breakdowns during implementation were directly attributable to faulty assumptions or deficiencies in project design. These factors were particularly notable in the less than anticipated achievements of the natural resources projects. For example, a major component of a Somalia forestry project failed because the project paper made incorrect assumptions about land and weather, overestimated tree growth rate, and recommended inappropriate species. Lack of detailed consideration given to a research component and to project administration limited accomplishments in a Senegal cereals production project. Assumptions regarding the implementing host country institution's objectives and capacity proved invalid in a Somalia groundwater project.

Project design weaknesses were noted, as well, in other sectors of the Bureau's portfolio. Technical assistance requirements were underestimated in a Botswana rural sector project. The ability of the Zaire Roads Bureau to cover operating costs for project activities and to assume responsibility for maintenance of project roads was incorrectly assumed in a Central Shaba development program. Slow disbursements under a Kenya commodity import program resulted from miscalculations during project design about the availability of foreign exchange reserves. A Botswana small enterprise project was having difficulty because a deficient project design led to project implementation in a geographic area where demand was not sufficient for project services.

It is easy, with benefit of hindsight, to say that all of these project design faults are correctable. The evaluations do show, however, that when attention is paid to project design, it does pay off in minimizing or avoiding implementation problems that can be quite costly in terms of results.

D. INSTITUTION BUILDING

Perhaps the most commonly noted issue in the evaluations was the failure to give adequate attention to institution building objectives and to take advantage of opportunities in this area. Too frequently, there was a pattern of emphasis on achieving outputs to the exclusion of institution building. In some extreme cases, advisors did not have or ignored counterparts even though institutional development was clearly a project goal.

Some examples that stood out included: a Lesotho education project where two successive interim evaluations pointed to failure to assign counterparts, a Somalia groundwater project where project staff was largely isolated from the implementing host country institution, a Niger forestry project where no

counterpart relations had been established, and a Niger agricultural production project where the size of the project made it a competitor and a threat to the very national level institutions it was designed to strengthen. In a number of other activities, training objectives were overlooked and opportunities to advance institution building were not pursued.

Institutional development is more difficult and a longer term process than the achievement of specific outputs. Another lesson from these evaluations is that the Africa Bureau needs to give even higher priority to institution building in project design, implementation and management. As a minimum, the Bureau can insist that technical assistance advisors have clearly designated counterparts and responsibility for developing them.

E. SUSTAINABILITY

Another critical issue receiving a lot of attention in the evaluations was sustainability. In project after project, serious concerns were expressed about the extent to which activities would continue after the projects terminated. Insufficient attention to institution building was clearly one major factor affecting sustainability. Other factors were inappropriate technology, lack of maintenance, and lack of planning for user fees or other alternative sources of financing for new services.

Using tractors to prepare rice land was an inappropriate technology that could not be sustained in a Zambia rice development project. Without stronger attention to maintenance, the gains achieved in the road rehabilitation projects will be seriously undermined. Crop protection services in a Guinea-Bissau project could not continue without the GOGB charging, and a system of user fees needed to be planned and introduced. Plans for user fees and cost recovery were needed in the CCCD projects. The degree to which recurrent costs of the Lesotho education systems project could be covered by the GOL needed to be analyzed before the project was continued much longer.

The evaluations appear to signal a need for a higher priority focus by the Bureau on sustainability factors at the outset of project planning and design as well as during implementation.

F. DATA COLLECTION

The need for data to evaluate new interventions and to assess impact was a common issue in a number of evaluations.

Improved water management techniques and agronomic practices were objectives of a Guinea-Bissau rice production project. However, by failing to collect cost and yield data, it

was impossible for the evaluation team to assess these techniques. In a Zaire nutrition project, no evaluations of the nutrition interventions were carried out although an analysis of them was a major purpose of the project. While a Senegal cereals production project was meeting its output goals, failure to produce data left questions unanswered on adaptability of different species to different sites, survival rates, and acceptance by villagers.

More systematic efforts to gather impact data are generally needed; otherwise, the value and significance of the activities will be lost.

G. ROLE OF WOMEN

A few evaluations specifically touched on the role of women. For example, the evaluation of a Guinea-Bissau rice production project pointed out that inputs selected for investment were more likely to be used by men than women even though rice land had traditionally been cultivated by women. In a Chad PVO project, the evaluation team noted women were performing most of the work on water catchment structures and recommended an analysis of the impact of the project on gender roles. A good effort in outreach to women was noted in a Zaire Central Shaba project. Based on a USAID study, the Zaire Extension Service had hired more women contact farmers and extension agents and was recruiting a female sociologist.

Not often raised as an issue in the evaluations, the lesson may be that evaluators as well as project designers and implementors need to pay more attention to assessing gender role implications and impact on women.

H. USAID MANAGEMENT

Management implications and demands of these consistently complex activities were often underestimated. Timely procurement action was not taken by USAID in a Guinea-Bissau rice project, and procurement responsibility should have been given to the contractor. More USAID monitoring than had been planned was needed in a Lesotho agriculture project where problems had developed. USAID should have undertaken a more thorough review of the project implementation and management requirements for a REDSO regional agriculture research project.

USAID budgetary control was inadequate in a Swaziland teacher training project, and the need for monitoring was underestimated in a REDSO regional management training project. While USAID management of Mali's economic policy reform program was effective, it was more staff intensive than the mission anticipated. The evaluators specifically recommended the Bureau

give greater attention to the management demands of future economic policy reform programs. Evaluators of the Somalia CIP found a positive impact on policy reform when the mission took a "hands-on" approach, but important opportunities for policy reform were missed when the mission did not take this approach.

The lesson here is that project designers need to examine management implications of proposed projects more carefully. With its direct-hire field staff stretched as thin as it is, the Bureau has to weigh very carefully the complexity of projects initiated and their management requirements against the limited management resources available.

IV. SECTORAL SUMMARIES FOR PROJECT DESIGNERS, MANAGERS AND IMPLEMENTORS

In this section we summarize progress by sector, highlight innovative approaches and project components that were especially successful, and identify common issues. Our aim is to make this section helpful to and useable by Bureau project designers, implementors, and managers.

A. AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Eighteen evaluations (13 interim and 5 final) were reviewed. The evaluations covered a wide range of agricultural development projects of which 16 are country-focused and 2 are support for regional research programs. Most are multi-faceted activities including not only production but also extension, credit, and institutional development components.

Botswana - Rural Sector Grant.
Cameroon - Agriculture Management and Planning.
Chad - PVO Development Initiatives.
Guinea-Bissau - South Coast Agricultural Development.
Guinea-Bissau - Food Crop Protection III.
Guinea-Bissau - Rice Production.
Kenya - On-Farm Grain Storage.
Lesotho - Agricultural Production and Institutional Support.
Madagascar - Imported Commodities under Agricultural Rehabilitation Support.
Niger - Agricultural Production Support.
REDSO/ESA - SAAR-CIMMYT II Farming Systems Research II.
REDSO - CIP/PRAPAC Potato Research Network.
Togo - Animal Traction Development.
Uganda - Food Production Support.
Zaire - Central Shaba Agricultural Development.
Zaire - Fish Culture Expansion.
Zambia - Chama Rice.
Zambia - Small Farmer Production Program.

1. Progress

Projects generally are making good progress against projected outputs. The impact on production through improved practices and strengthened institutions is promising.

2. Successes

Some notable successes stemmed from efforts to work directly with, understand, and involve people at the grass-roots level.

- A cooperative training component in Niger Agricultural Production was making substantial progress in a short time toward meeting the project's economic, social and institutional objectives. The main reasons CLUSA's cooperatives were succeeding in moving toward capitalization and self-management where others failed were: 1) CLUSA's assistants were willing to be based in the villages; 2) the training model was village-based needs driven and pragmatic; and 3) intervention was centered on training and not credit.

- Extension activities in Zaire Central Shaba were over one year ahead of schedule because an innovative form of the Training and Visit system was used. Instead of relying on a large staff of extension agents as had been tried unsuccessfully in an earlier project (too costly and difficult to manage), the Zaire Extension Service chose to limit the number of extension agents and rely largely on local contact farmers, both men and women, selected from the village communities.

- A laudable effort to improve project outreach to women was noted in the same Central Shaba project. Following a USAID-sponsored study, the Zaire Extension Service hired more women contact farmers and two women extension agents and was seeking a female sociologist to take charge of a new Women in Development office.

3. Issues

- a. Institution Building. Most projects had institutional building objectives, but in too many cases these objectives were not being effectively pursued. Opportunities to strengthen institutional development were being missed. For example:

- Kenya On-Farm Grain Storage. The project was having a significant positive impact on grain storage practices. However, project personnel were not working with counterpart personnel who eventually would have the responsibility for carrying on project activities after the project terminated.

- Lesotho Agricultural Production. Again, while the project was accomplishing quantified outputs, development of the Production Coordination Unit within the Ministry of Agriculture was not receiving sufficient attention from USAID or the project contractor. Also,

this project demonstrated the difficulty of attempting institutional strengthening and long-term training simultaneously. Only with a longer than scheduled life of project time frame would it be possible to spread out trainee departures and plan for appropriate expatriate technical assistance presence before, during and after trainee absences.

- Niger Agricultural Production. The size of this project made it appear a competitor (and a threat) in physical, financial and human resources terms to the very national-level institutions it was designed to strengthen. From the point of view of the project, it was often easier and more effective to bypass the weak national service and go directly to the field or set up its own operating infrastructure. The result was the failure to collaborate and cooperate at the national level. The national services were not being prepared to sustain the field-level resources that had been developed or to maintain the additional infrastructure that had been created.

b. Sustainability. In addition to inadequate focus on institutional development, project sustainability was called into question by other factors:

- In the final year of the Togo Animal Traction project, A.I.D. was still providing the major share of recurrent and capital costs. Alternative sources of funding had not been identified.

- Using tractors for preparing rice land was inappropriate technology and could not be sustained in Zambia Chama Rice Development. Project designers assumed that mechanization would increase the amount of rice land, number of rice farmers, and productivity per farmer and per hectare. In fact, tractors frequently were unavailable because of breakdown, lack of fuel, difficulty in obtaining spare parts, and lack of funds to purchase necessary inputs.

- Crop protection services in Guinea-Bissau Food Crop Protection III could not continue to be provided by the GOGB for free. A system of user fees needed to be introduced. The evaluators recommended small farmers not be charged but that larger farmers, who benefitted the most, be required to pay a fee of perhaps 10 percent of the crop value.

c. Project Design. Faulty project design impeded implementation of some project activities.

- Weak project design was a factor in slow progress under the Botswana Rural Sector Grant. The complexity of the project made achievement of objectives difficult. Implementation plans were drawn up before the necessary baseline studies and economic analyses were even considered. Technical assistance requirements were underestimated. The Productive Enterprises Development Fund was only minimally successful because the institutional capacity of the National Development Bank was overestimated.

- Effectiveness of technical assistance in Uganda Food Production Support was limited by diffusion of effort over a too broad range of activities, some of which might have been judged to be of minor importance.

- Delays in the road component were having a negative impact on agricultural outputs in Zaire Central Shaba. The project paper contained invalid assumptions regarding the ability of the Roads Bureau to cover operating costs for project activities and to initiate a maintenance program.

d. Data Collection. Projects which attempt to improve production capability must have baseline data and gather cost-effectiveness data in a systematic way to measure results and guide implementation. Such data were not always available to the degree needed.

- A principal output of Guinea-Bissau Rice Production was improved water management techniques and agronomic practices. However, the failure to collect cost and yield data made it impossible for the evaluation team to determine the implications of using these techniques.

- The evaluation of SAAR-CIMMYT II noted that the single most effective way of establishing a farmer focus to research (the major purpose of the project) was to achieve results and document them. Much better efforts to document results were needed.

e. Impact on Women. More attention is needed in assessing the role of women and the impact on them.

- Considerable project resources in Guinea-Bissau Rice Production were invested in inputs more likely to be used by men than women. Since rice is traditionally cultivated in the bas-fond by women and their

daughters, the project should have subsidized the purchase of inputs that would have directly increased the productivity of women's labor in rice production.

- In Chad PVO Development Initiatives, the evaluation team noted women seemed to be performing all of the hard physical labor required for construction and extension of the water catchment structures. It was unclear whether women normally did so or were engaged because of food for work (FFW) rations. The team recommended the PVO assess the economic and social impact of catchment construction on gender roles in the region, examine the comparative cash values of women's and men's FFW rations, and determine whether women were receiving plot allocations commensurate with their physical labor contributions.

f. USAID Management. Management implications of these complex activities were frequently underestimated.

- USAID was unable to take timely procurement action under Guinea-Bissau Rice Production and should have assigned procurement responsibility to the contractor.

- While the Lesotho Agricultural Production project was designed to minimize direct oversight by USAID, that approach no longer was appropriate when problems developed. Closer and more effective USAID monitoring was needed.

- A more thorough review of project implementation and management should have been undertaken by USAID when designing SAAR-CIMMYT II. Since these issues were not directly and adequately addressed in the project design, misunderstandings resulted. The evaluation team specifically recommended that USAID prepare a handbook providing information to project field staff on implementation requirements and standard regulations covering use of project funds.

B. HEALTH, NUTRITION, AND FAMILY PLANNING

Eleven evaluations (nine interim and two final) were reviewed. Evaluations covered four CCCD (Combatting Childhood Communicable Diseases) projects, four family planning projects, one nutrition project, an activity to strengthen health planning capacity, and an activity to support a school of public health.

Burkina Faso - Family Planning Support.
Burkina Faso - Strengthening Health Planning Capacity.
Central African Republic - ACSI/CCCD.
Cote D'Ivoire - ACSI/CCCD.
Ghana - Contraceptive Supplies.
Lesotho - ACSI/CCCD.
REDSO/ESA - Family Planning Training Support, Center for African Family Studies.
Rwanda - CCCD.
Somalia - Family Health Services.
Zaire - Area Nutrition Improvement.
Zaire - School of Public Health.

1. Progress

Progress overall was mixed. In the CCCD projects, while immunization targets were being achieved, progress was less successful in oral rehydration therapy and malaria control. The Burkina Faso Health Planning activity was making good progress while the Zaire School of Public Health activity was falling behind schedule. Substantial progress was reported in all the family planning projects (Somalia, Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Center for African Family Studies) with actual or anticipated impacts on family planning acceptors or contraception prevalence rates greater than projected. Zaire Nutrition Improvement was also progressing well.

2. Successes

- National Training Teams in Burkina Faso Health Planning were at the heart of a highly successful institutional development strategy. They brought strength to the training component and formed the basis of achieving national self-sufficiency in training.
- An innovative supervisory system was a major achievement in the Rwanda CCCD project and a model for use in other CCCD activities.
- The Center for African Family Studies evaluation team utilized a questionnaire distributed to former participants as one method of gathering data for the evaluation. The

questionnaire generated a surprisingly high response rate, and suggests that this technique might be utilized more often.

3. Issues

a. Sustainability. All the CCCD evaluations specifically focused on sustainability as a particularly important issue, because the projects established new and expanded national services. The evaluations stressed the need to pay close attention to developing and implementing plans for user fees and cost recovery. While the Burkina Faso Health Planning project, according to the evaluators, had been very successful in developing planning capacity, it needed to emphasize financial planning more to support this new capacity. The evaluators of Zaire Nutrition Improvement pointed out that little thought had been given to how costly project activities could be financed when the project ended.

b. Data Collection. The Zaire Nutrition Improvement evaluation expressed concern that while the project funded many nutrition interventions, the interventions were never evaluated. This was a serious shortcoming because analysis of the interventions was a major purpose of the project. The evaluation suggested such analysis may have been a USAID priority but not a priority for CEPLANUT, the GOZ entity carrying out the project. The important lesson here may be that future nutrition projects need to pay special attention to data collection for evaluation.

C. EDUCATION AND JOB-RELATED SKILLS

Nine evaluations (seven interim and two final) were reviewed. Included are two formal education projects (one a broad, multi-faceted effort and one in teacher training) and six non-formal (one a regional management training activity and five country specific management and skills training projects).

Botswana - Workforce and Skills Training, Phase II.
Lesotho - Basic and Non-formal Education Systems.
Lesotho - Basic and Non-formal Education Systems.
REDSO/ESA - Support to Regional Organizations ESAMI.
Somalia - Management Training and Development.
Somalia - Refugee Self-Reliance.
Swaziland - Teacher Training.
Togo - Zio River Economic Development.
Uganda - Manpower for Agricultural Development.

1. Progress

Progress as measured in these mostly interim evaluations was generally good.

2. Successes

- Innovative integration of agronomic research, extension, credit training, and small business development in Togo Zio River Economic Development was highlighted by the evaluation. The evaluators considered the approach a model for technological transfer. The approach also demonstrated a model monitoring and evaluation system.

- Partnership for Productivity, one of the implementing PVOs of Somalia Refugee Self-Reliance, created a model for future skills training programs. Of special note were the surveys carried out prior to offering consulting services and business advice which helped adapt programs to the reality of the local environment. Also, data were gathered and records were kept throughout the life of the subproject on progress and impact.

3. Issues

a. Institution Building. While projects were achieving success in immediate project outputs, such as numbers trained, institutional development aspects were being overlooked. This, in turn, was calling into question the sustainability of activities generated after projects were terminated.

- Two interim evaluations, two years apart, of Lesotho Education Systems both revealed the failure to assign counterparts to the project technical advisors. The second evaluation also showed that most other recommendations not corrected in the first report were primarily in the area of institutional development.

- The Somalia Refugee Self-Reliance evaluation indicated that refugees benefitted from short-term activities under the project, but that the institution building aspects were less successful.

- In Swaziland Teacher Training, the highly effective U.S. technical assistance team was tending to operate too independently and failing to develop counterparts.

- In Uganda Manpower, even recognizing the unstable political conditions, the contractors' achievements were less than what was possible or should have been accomplished in institutional development. They had

not assisted at all with the development of an agricultural research plan, an activity of the highest priority under the project. Furthermore, the technical assistance team had not selected and trained extension specialists, provided no assistance to the university on curricula or staff development, and failed to strengthen linkages between research and extension.

b. Sustainability was a general concern related to the lack of progress in institution building. Also of concern was the capacity to continue covering costs of new services. The Lesotho Education Systems interim evaluation (approximately four years after the project started) recommended that USAID bring in an education economist to analyze the GOL capacity to finance recurrent costs and to examine different scenarios for sustaining project activities at various projected levels of GOL support. Clearly, this issue had received insufficient attention during project design and early implementation.

c. Procurement. Two evaluations pointed to difficulties in project procurement because USAID allocated responsibility to itself (Somalia Management Training); or to a Procurement Services Agency in the U.S. (Uganda Manpower). Recommendations were for USAID and REDSO/ESA to streamline the process and/or to give responsibility to the prime contractor who was most concerned about timely purchases and delivery.

d. Management. USAID management problems included inadequate budgetary control (Swaziland Teacher Training); overly optimistic project design assumptions about limited REDSO/ESA requirements for monitoring the project (ESAMI), especially since irregularities were found in ESAMI's accounting procedures and financial management information systems; and project design and implementation problems (Somalia Management Training).

D. NATURAL RESOURCES

Eight evaluations (six interim and two final) were reviewed:

Niger - Forestry and Land Use Planning.
REDSO/ESA - Operational Program Grant to CARE-Comoros.
Rwanda - Gituza Forestry.
Senegal - Cereals Production II.
Somalia - CDA Forestry Phase I Refugee Areas.
Somalia - Comprehensive Groundwater Development.
Somalia - Central Rangelands Development.
Somalia - Juba Development Analytical Studies.

1. Progress

Results were less positive in this sector than in any of the other sectors reviewed. While the results were preliminary, the relative lack of success with these natural resources projects suggests that Bureau planners need to consider measures to strengthen performance in this area.

2. Successes

- The model site in Niger Forestry and Land Use Planning successfully demonstrated a more pragmatic approach to land use planning and recognized that local participation was essential. After a generation of donor financed projects using a top-down approach, this model represented an important innovation. The most significant lesson learned was that recurrent costs of natural forest management could be covered under sustained field management through the local participation/cooperative approach. It demonstrated the effectiveness of a cooperative mode of management between the GON and a farmer cooperative, wherein the State and farmers shared both responsibility and benefits. Further, the model site had demonstrated clearly that contractual collaboration between the GON and Farmer Cooperatives could lead to increased productivity and few, if any, public funds would be required for recurring costs. The evaluation recommended that A.I.D. build on these lessons when designing forestry and natural resources projects for other countries in the Sahel region.

- Woodstoves proved to be unplanned successes in Rwanda Gituza Forestry and Senegal Cereals Production. In the former, the original objective of the energy conservation component was to improve household energy management. At an early stage of implementation, project staff discovered that improved cookstoves were a major vehicle for achieving this goal. In the latter, wood-burning stoves were considered but dropped during project design. However, during implementation, stoves were included with great success. Clearly, woodstoves should be seriously considered as a component in future natural resource projects.

3. Issues

a. Project Design. Project design deficiencies were a principal factor in anticipated accomplishments not being achieved. For example:

- A major fuelwood component of Somalia CDA Forestry Phase I, representing 66 percent of total project funding, failed basically because the project paper

made incorrect assumptions concerning the availability of good quality land, underestimated the harshness of the environment and lack of rainfall, failed to take into account the desiccating effects of winds, overestimated the growth rate of trees, and recommended inappropriate species. These project design deficiencies were compounded by the fact that the implementing PV(s) failed to critically examine them as they proceeded with implementation.

- The accomplishments in Senegal Cereals Production were limited by a lack of detailed consideration of key aspects such as research, management of coordination among participating agencies, and USAID project administration. Two key items that should have been included as project outputs were: 1) identification of qualitatively improved agro-forestry interventions, and 2) a coordinated research program. Also, soil studies, generated later in the project, would have been more useful during the design stage when their results could have been used in planning a better mix of tree-planting and soil-restoring actions.

- Major shortcomings in project effectiveness of Somalia Comprehensive Groundwater were traceable to invalid project design assumptions regarding the Water Development Agency's objectives, cost effectiveness of rehabilitating its existing equipment versus buying new equipment, appropriateness of its preferred technology for drilling wells, and its maintenance program. Also, the assumption that a major share of water needs could be met through groundwater proved to be invalid. An unplanned effect was that large wells led to large population settlements which produced environmental degradation in some areas. Also, a high risk of severe dislocation existed if a well failed for any reason. Future projects should consider drilling a larger number of wells with lower production rates.

- Critical assumptions implicit in achieving linkages between outputs and purpose in Somalia Central Range-lands were questionable. The evaluation team noted that: potentially workable range management technologies might not be socially acceptable to Somalis, water development may increase animal production but may promote overgrazing and decrease in economic well-being, and trainees under the project might not remain with the National Range Agency because of poor pay and benefits.

b. Institution Building. Insufficient attention to establishing and developing counterpart relationships during project implementation was undermining institution building objectives.

- In Somalia Comprehensive Groundwater, since the project staff was largely isolated from the staff of the Water Development Agency, skills were not being transferred to the degree planned.

- While a major purpose of Niger Forestry and Land Use Planning was to establish a functional planning and managerial capability, no counterpart relationship was established between project staff and SPD, the responsible unit. Hence, the SPD, which was supposed to be the centerpiece of the project, was not being developed and was not even functional at the time of the evaluation (eight years into the project).

- Lack of attention to training and institutional development was also noted in Somalia Juba Analytical Studies, REDSO Grant to CARE-Comoros, and Somalia CDA Forestry.

c. Quality of Technical Assistance. While the quality of technical assistance was generally not faulted in these natural resources projects, the Somalia CDA Forestry evaluation noted a significant lack of forestry expertise in PVO staff for the project. Although committed and hard-working, their limited experience with forestry projects led to uncritical acceptance of faulty project paper assumptions and choice of poor techniques and inappropriate fast growing species.

d. Data collection and analysis are crucial to developing projects based on village-level soil conservation and agro-forestry trials. This was an important lesson learned in Senegal Cereals Production. While the project met its objectives with respect to production, training, and extension, there was a lack of attention to the project's monitoring and research goals. As a result, the project failed to produce data on adaptability of different species to different sites, survival rates, and acceptance by villagers.

E. TRANSPORTATION

Five evaluations (two interim and three final) were reviewed:

Chad - Strengthening Road Maintenance.
Swaziland - Rural Reconstruction.
Zambia - Regional Transport and Storage Development.
Zimbabwe - Blantyre-Tete Harare Road.
Zimbabwe - Transport and Storage Development,
Makuti-Chirundu Road.

1. Progress

Projects generally met or exceeded outputs in terms of road kilometers built or rehabilitated.

2. Successes

• Use of the Fixed Amount Reimbursement (FAR) method of disbursement, which was the principal focus of the Zimbabwe Blantyre-Tete Road evaluation, proved to be a very effective disbursement procedure. At the beginning of the project, the Department of Roads used a force account approach which required extensive record keeping at the job site. A switch to the FAR procedure vastly reduced the time spent on record keeping.

3. Issues

a. Maintenance. Inadequate attention to road maintenance significantly undermined or threatened to undermine the gains achieved in these road rehabilitation projects.

• Along with rehabilitation of a 63 km. road, a principal objective of Chad Road Maintenance was to assist in developing an organization for maintaining Chad's road network. However, by the fourth year of this five year project, progress toward developing such an organization was limited. A high turnover in contractor personnel had a negative effect on: work productivity, project continuity, counterpart training, and establishing improved systems and procedures.

• Swaziland Rural Reconstruction did not place any emphasis on maintenance because it was assumed that the GOS would absorb reconstructed roads in its regular maintenance program. This did not happen. As a result, by the time of the evaluation (40 months from when the Project Agreement was signed), some of the

reconstructed roads under the project already required reconstruction rather than regular maintenance.

- The Zambia Kafue-Chirundu Road evaluation team questioned whether the road would be adequately maintained when construction came to an end. Dump trucks provided for maintenance had disappeared and weighing scales had not been installed. The team strongly recommended that USAID press the GRZ on its maintenance plans.

b. Impact Data. The evaluation of Zambia Kafue-Chirundu Road identified the lack of data collection to assess impact. It recommended that USAID encourage the GRZ to establish a system for gathering key baseline and follow-up data and to arrange for a transport economist to analyze economic activity along the road. While the other evaluations did not specifically address this issue, evidence offered regarding impact was largely anecdotal suggesting a common need to more systematically obtain impact data.

F. PRIVATE SECTOR

Six evaluations (three interim and three final) were reviewed. Three are country specific small enterprise development projects, one is a regional support for studies IQC, and two are credit union support projects (one regional and one national).

Botswana - Small Enterprise Development.

Kenya - Rural Private Enterprise.

REDSO/ESA - Parastatal Studies, Restructuring, and Divestiture IQC.

REDSO/ESA - ACCOSCA.

Senegal - Community and Enterprise Development.

Togo - National Credit Union Association.

1. Progress

Progress was generally quite promising with the notable exception of the Botswana Small Enterprise Project. Projects were meeting output targets and showing initial evidence of impact.

2. Successes

- Kenya Rural Enterprise Program (REP). The evaluators recommended small scale enterprise specialists and project designers world-wide should take advantage of REP's experience in Kenya and its materials on market analysis for small firms and training for credit. Important and innovative elements of REP's successful strategy included product market analysis and the provision of financial training and bookkeeping to entrepreneurs and NGOs before making loan funds available. The evaluators also developed a set of indicators for monitoring progress and assessing impact because such data were not being collected.

- Rapid reconnaissance surveys were used to strengthen the original project design and to gain an understanding of the needs of the target group. These surveys contributed to the success of the credit program for small scale enterprises in Senegal Community and Enterprise Development.

3. Issues

This sample was too diverse to reach any general conclusions or to see any patterns regarding issues. Botswana Small Enterprise was having difficulty principally because of the weak analysis at the project design stage. Project implementation began in an area that was geographically too small to provide sufficient suitable clients, and demand was not sufficient for project services.

G. NON-PROJECT ASSISTANCE (CIPs and FOOD AID)

Eight evaluations (four interim and four final) were reviewed.

- Guinea - United States Food Aid.
- Kenya - Commodity Import Program.
- Mali - Economic Policy Reform Program.
- REDSO/ESA - Commodity Import Program.
- Senegal - PL 480 Title III Food for Development.
- Somalia - Commodity Import Programs.
- Togo - Cereals Export Liberalization Program.
- Zaire - Commodity Import Programs.

1. Progress

Given the diverse objectives of these activities, no generalization about progress would be meaningful.

2. Successes

Our review did not focus on program successes of these non-project assistance activities because a parallel effort in the Bureau was already underway to do so. A success noted on the management side is, however, worth noting here.

- An excellent computerized tracking system was developed under the Kenya CIP to follow each CIP transaction from application submission until goods were cleared through customs and local currency was deposited in the special account.

3. Issues

No common patterns of issues emerged. However, there were some significant lessons learned.

- Deficiencies at the project design stage resulted in slow initial disbursement of the Kenya CIP and failure to meet its stated balance of payments objectives. Slow disbursements resulted in part from the fact that Kenyan foreign exchange reserves were considerably higher than had been anticipated at the project design stage. A decline in oil prices and increase in coffee prices, both of which impacted favorably on Kenya's balance of payments, were not foreseen.

- Evaluation of the Seychelles Commodity Import Program found that foreign economic assistance, including A.I.D., was actually undermining reform because it was helping the GOS sustain its deficits without undertaking reform. The evaluators strongly recommended more emphasis be given to policy dialogue with the GOS during both the design and review process.

- Similarly, evaluators of the Somalia CIP found a positive impact on policy reform when the mission took a "hands-on" approach, but important opportunities for policy reform were missed when the mission did not take this approach.

- While USAID management of Mali's Economic Policy Reform Program was very sound and effective, it was far more staff intensive than the mission anticipated. The evaluators recommended the Africa Bureau give greater attention to the management demands of future economic policy reform programs to assure that missions have the necessary direct-hire and contract staff capability for implementation.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Bureau should encourage missions to carry out systematic in-house reviews after approximately two years into implementation. It was noted that many projects were not evaluated for the first time until after three or four years, and opportunities to make early mid-course corrections were missed.

2. In the evaluations we reviewed, there was a tendency to focus more on problems than successes. In its evaluations, the Bureau should consider focusing more on factors that were especially successful and could be applied to similar projects.

3. To facilitate comparative project reviews, the Bureau should also consider developing a list of standard issues that would be systematically addressed in all evaluations. Such a list could be based on the general issues that emerged from this review.

ANNEX A

LIST OF EVALUATIONS REVIEWED BY SECTOR

A. Agricultural Development

Botswana. Project Assistance Completion Report: Rural Sector Grant Project (633-0077), April, 1989

Cameroon. Agriculture Management and Planning Project, Evaluation Report (631-0008), March, 1987

Chad. Midterm Evaluation: Chad PVO Development Initiatives Project (677-0051), May 1988

Guinea-Bissau. Evaluation of the South Coast Agricultural Development Project (657-0010), December 1987

Guinea-Bissau. Project Evaluation: Guinea-Bissau Food Crop Protection III (657-0012), February 1988

Guinea-Bissau. Evaluation of the Rice Production Project in Guinea-Bissau (657-009, 657-004), June, 1987

Kenya. Evaluation: On-Farm Grain Storage Project (615-0190), March, 1987

Lesotho. Evaluation of the Lesotho Agricultural Production and Institutional Support Project (632-0221), May, 1988

Madagascar. Evaluation of the Use and Socio-Economic Profitability of Imported Commodities under the Madagascar Agricultural Rehabilitation Support Project (687-0101), December, 1987

Niger. First External Evaluation of the Agricultural Production Support Project (683-0234), January, 1988

REDSO/ESA. Midterm Evaluation: SAAR-CIMMYT II Farming Systems Research II (698-0435-03), March, 1988

REDSO. Midterm Evaluation: CIP/PRAPAC Potato Research Network Project (698-0435.04), April, 1989

Togo. Final Evaluation: Togo Animal Traction Development Project (693-0218), August, 1988

Uganda. Food Production Support Project Evaluation/Design Report (617-0102), October, 1987

Zaire. Start-Up Evaluation: Central Shaba Agricultural Development Project (660-0105), December, 1988

Zaire. Project Assistance Completion Report: Fish Culture Expansion Project (660-0080), undated

Zambia. Chama Rice Evaluation (611-0204), August, 1986

Zambia. Small Farmer Production Program, Western Province, Zambia (611-0205) September, 1986

E. Health, Nutrition and Family Planning

Burkina Faso. Interim Evaluation/Family Planning Support Project (686-0260), December, 1988

Burkina Faso. Evaluation/Strengthening Health Planning Capacity Project (686-0251), July, 1987

Central African Republic. Evaluation of the ACSI/CCCD Project in CAR (698-0421.76), November, 1986

Cote D'Ivoire. Evaluation of ACSI/CCCD Project in Cote D'Ivoire, June, 1988

Ghana. Midterm Evaluation: Contraceptive Supplies Project (641-0109), April 1988

Lesotho. Evaluation of ACSI/CCCD in Lesotho (698-0421.32), February, 1988

REDSO/ESA. Midterm Evaluation Report/Family Planning Training Support Project, Center for African Family Studies (623-0662-G-00-5022-00), September, 1987

Rwanda. CCCD End of Project Evaluation (698-0421), May, 1988

Somalia. Midterm Evaluation, Somali Family Health Services Project (649-0131), March, 1987

Zaire. Final Evaluation of Zaire Area Nutrition Improvement Project (660-0079), December, 1987

Zaire. Evaluation of School of Public Health Project (660-0101), July, 1987

C. Education and Job-Related Skills

Botswana. Interim Evaluation: Botswana Workforce and Skills Training Project, Phase II (633-0241), December, 1988

Lesotho. Basic and Non-formal Education Systems Project: 18 Month Evaluation Report (632-0222), November, 1986

Lesotho. Basic and Non-formal Education Systems Project: Interim Evaluation (632-0222), April, 1988

REDSO/ESA. Support to Regional Organizations ESAMI Subproject Evaluation Report (698-0413.09), May, 1988

Somalia. Somalia Management Training and Development: First Interim Evaluation Report (649-0119), July, 1988

Somalia. Refugee Self-Reliance Project Final Evaluation Report (649-0123), April, 1988

Swaziland. Midterm Evaluation of the Swaziland Teacher Training Project (654-0214), July, 1987

Togo. Midterm Evaluation of the Zio River Economic Development Project (693.0226), March, 1987

Uganda. Project Evaluation: Uganda Manpower for Development Agricultural Project (617-0103), November, 1987

D. Natural Resources

Niger. Final Evaluation of Niger Forestry and Land Use Planning Project (683-0230), December, 1987

REDSO/ESA. Evaluation of Operational Program Grant to CARE-Comoros (602-0001), April, 1988

Rwanda. Final Evaluation of the Gituza Forestry Project (698-0502.96), August, 1988

Senegal. Comprehensive Report and Evaluation: Cereals Production II Project Extension (685-0235), August, 1988

Somalia. CDA Forestry Phase I Refugee Areas Report (649-0122), April, 1988

Somalia. Evaluation: Comprehensive Groundwater Development (649-0104), March, 1987

Somalia. Interim Evaluation of Somalia Central Rangelands Development Project (649-0134), June, 1987

Somalia. Juba Development Analytical Studies/ Midterm Evaluation (649-0134), April, 1987

E. Transportation

Chad. Evaluation Study: Strengthening Road Maintenance Project (677-0050), May, 1988

Swaziland. Final Evaluation: Rural Reconstruction Project (645-0224), December, 1987

Zambia. Evaluation of the Regional Transport and Storage Development Project (690-0209.2), November, 1987

Zimbabwe. Final Evaluation Report for the Blantyre-Tete Harare Road (690-0234.12), September, 1987

Zimbabwe. Final Evaluation: Transport and Storage Development, Makuti-Chirundu Road (690-0209.10), October, 1987

F. Private Sector

Botswana. Small Enterprise Development Project (632-0228), August, 1988

Kenya. Midterm Evaluation of the Rural Enterprise Program of the Rural Private Enterprise Project (615-0220), November, 1987

REDSO/ESA. Evaluation Report of the REDSO/ESA Parastatal Studies, Restructuring, and Divestiture IQC (632-8501-C-00-5006), December, 1987

REDSO/ESA. Midterm Evaluation of ACCOSCA (698-0413.13), June, 1987

Senegal. Midterm Evaluation of the Community and Enterprise Development Project in Senegal (685-0260), June, 1987

Togo. Final Evaluation Report: Development of the Togo National Credit Union Association (693-0224), August, 1988

G. Non-Project Assistance (CIPs and Food Aid)

Guinea. An Evaluation of United States Food Aid in Guinea, August, 1987

Kenya. Evaluation of the Kenya Commodity Import Program (CIP) (615-0213), February, 1987

Mali. Mid-term Evaluation of Mali's Economic Policy Reform Program (688-0240), July, 1987

REDSO/ESA. Evaluation of the Seychelles Commodity Import Program, FY 1982-86 (K-662-K-601/605), January, 1987

Senegal. Senegal PL 480 Title III Food for Development: Lessons Learned, February, 1987

Somalia. Evaluation of the Commodity Import Programs (649-K-603, 649-K-604), November, 1987

Togo. Interim Evaluation of Togo's Cereals Export Liberalization Program, May, 1988

Zaire. Independent Impact Evaluation of USAID/ Kinshasa CIP Grants (660-0100, 660-0103, 660-121), February, 1988